1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

Tobacco Growing in Thrace

249 276 656 During an interview with some peasants in the office of the commune secretary of Toxotae in Thrace during May 1955, I was surprised to see some of the men pull out pink cigarette paper in which they expertly rolled cigarettes for a leisurely smoke.

"But why the pink paper?" I wanted to know.

"We are tobacco producers," they answered with an air of distinct pride. "We can keep some of the crop for our own use, but must use pink paper to distinguish our cigarettes from those that are bought."

"Yes," a gendarme added. "Any time I see a person smoking a pink cigarette I can go up to ask for a certificate showing that he is a tobacco grower and thus entitled to 'roll his own'!"

249 [123] [312] This conversation, which lasted for more than four hours, gave me an even better understanding of tobacco farming than I had gained on previous trips, as did frequent visits in the fields with the peasants who were transferring the plants from the seedbeds to the carefully prepared land or hauling barrels of water in their oxcart from a spring or well to the place where the planting was going on. What was most helpful of all, however, was the intimate story of one tobacco village, as described in the Near East Foundation study mentioned earlier. It gave me a deeper realization of the problems that the people there continue to face.[1]

621 162 [167] Dafnon, a village of 1145 people in 1952, is northwest of the city of Xanthe. This community, like so many in Northern Greece, was settled by Greek refugees from Asia Minor and the Pontus following the departure of 127 Turkish families in 1924. By 1935, 294 families had moved in, attracted as they were by the rich vegetation, the good climate of this semi-mountainous area, and the possibility of raising a high-priced product such as tobacco. When the first official land redistribution was carried out in 1935, and a second in 1938, it became apparent that the allotments were too small for the support of a family, and so people began to leave. Today there are 255 families.

621 36 [727] [526] [373] The village, covering slightly over 70 acres, sprawls over a hill. Two former Turkish mosques have been converted into Greek Orthodox churches; six grocery shops have total assets of less than $1700; three of the six coffeehouses attract the young men because each has a gramophone and a battery radio; the village school, destroyed along with many of the houses during the guerrilla war in 1948, was rebuilt in 1950. Outside the village is an athletic field on which 30 young men, members of the sports club, practice faithfully in an effort to uphold their reputation as the best football (soccer) team in the area. In the evening, the streets are dark, for Dafnon has no electricity and its people must rely upon kerosene lamps.

621 463 423 Of the 255 families previously mentioned, 220 own land; 32 own no

1:Sanders Z-5M (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

275 369 Transposed to a rural setting, the coffeehouse seems rude by comparison, its patrons less well dressed, but it meets the same needs. In the village it has a variety of forms.

Coffeehouse Types

275 443 The coffeehouse, as used in this description, comes in at least three assorted forms. One form is the shop or small variety store which sells some merchandise and serves drinks as well. A second form concentrates on drinks alone, alcoholic and nonalcoholic. A third specializes in coffee and sweets and usually serves little if any alcoholic beverages. As one would expect, the larger the village, the greater the likelihood of finding the second and third types. To understand the social utility of the first type one must travel to a small village, such as Psathotopi on the Arta Plains.[1]

[162] Psathotopi, with less than four hundred people, has three coffeehouses which are the only business establishments in the community. Each sells a few articles in addition to the coffee and ouzo. Women who want needles [562] or marcaroni either go or send their children to the shops' windows to make the purchases, for they are not allowed to enter the shops, which are man's 275 domain. The least prepossessing of the shops, interestingly enough, is the meeting place of the community officers. It is a branch-covered hut, four 443 by five yards in size, which has no chairs or tables inside but only benches 347 along the walls. Coffee, ouzo, and a few articles are sold here by the proprietor, who is also the church sexton. A second shop, of mud and reed construction, is larger (four by twelve yards) and contains four tables and six chairs, plus benches around the walls. Again, the merchandise consists of coffee, ouzo, and a few articles. The third shop, considered the best, is rented from the church. It is six by nine yards in size, of mud brick and stone construction. Its stock of merchandise is a little larger and it serves [262] Turkish delight as a special attraction. This shop has five tables, twelve chairs, and more benches than the other two. In other words, these three shops represent the local commerce of Psathotopi.

[162] In the Peloponnesos, when there was a lull in the conversation at a shop of three by five yards in a village of about six hundred, I noted what this emporium contained. On hand were cigarettes, Turkish delight, flints, ouzo, brandy, horseshoe nails, macaroni, kerosene lamp wicks, bobby pins, needles, thread, candy, sugar, and coffee. There was the customary counter, two tables and five benches around the walls. The kerosene lamp cast a kindly [373] glow about the place, contrasting with the dark unlit village streets of a winter night. A wood stove, fed charily, provided warmth. When I passed this same shop in the daytime, I realized what an ideal spot its front courtyard provided for basking when the sun shone in the winter and for shade during the summer when patrons could sit under the plane tree and watch the women come to the fountain for water. All that was needed was a

2: Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 193 EH1 Greece EH1
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crease in food costs, in work, and in the inconvenience of having strangers in one's house, were considered, in Vasilika, well worth the increase in daily wage from about forty drachmas in the 1950's to the 1961 wage of approximately sixty.

Even with the release from housing hired labor, the period of cotton cultivation is the most difficult of the year for the people of Vasilika. The weather is hot and often humid as well. Much of the hoeing must be done directly under the hot sun with the hoer bending from the waist to manipulate the short-handled hoes. To protect themselves from the sun and from being scratched by the plants, both the men and women keep their arms and legs covered and shade their faces. The women wear long lisle stockings, their oldest long-sleeved flannel or cotton dresses with high necks, and kerchiefs which they draw around to cover the lower half of their faces. Men and women alike are embarrassed when outsiders see them in their old, worn, earth-spattered field clothes. "See us!" they say as one walks by the fields during this season of the year, "in our rags. What can we do?"

In spite of the weariness and inevitable backaches cotton hoeing brings in its wake, the women must still continue with the ordinary housekeeping chores. Once every week or so, they get up at two or three o'clock in the morning to sift the flour and knead the dough for bread; an occasional day free from hoeing gives them time to do the accumulated family washing and ironing; and each day brings its own complement of bed-making, sweeping, cooking, and dish washing. Although the men have more frequent respites from hard physical work in May and June, both men and women obviously lose all the weight they gained during the less active winter months.

Irrigation, which begins in July, is a man's job. The cotton fields are irrigated twice or three times in the course of the summer, and a farmer and his son can ordinarily manage all the work. If not, the women of the household often help, or the farmer can hire men. But finding male farm labor is more difficult than finding women. Young men, when they reach twenty-one, serve for two years in the Armed Forces, and if a young man is not regularly needed on his father's farm, or has been educated, he is likely to have left the village for a town. Nevertheless, sons of poorer families, whether they attend gymnasium during the winter or not, are available for summer farm labor from the time they are thirteen or fourteen years old.

The task of irrigation consists of clearing shallow ditches into which the water will be channelled, and then channelling the pumped water into them. Men work barefoot and sometimes stand in water up to their knees. Occasionally they work through the night with torches for light, and one gets the impression that the men and boys enjoy such nights for the sense of adventure they give. The need to walk around in the mud and the inevitable spattering of the mud over their clothes and their faces are what the men find disagreeable about irrigation, and once again, they complain of their unsightly appearance.

In October and November, if the weather has been normal, the cotton is picked. This requires a prolonged period of work by many hands, since the plants mature at different times: some cotton is ready for picking each day for a

2: Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 116 EH1 Greece EH1
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231 With few exceptions, dogs, like the other animals, are not considered [552] pets. They are not given names and are referred to simply as "our dog." Parents [865] permit young children to play roughly with them and to tease and abuse them as they wish. The animal is fed scraps of bread once a day, and there is a feeling that there may be some advantage to keeping it slightly hungry. The dogs also act as scavengers whenever horses or other large animals die in the vicinity of [178] the village. Further evidence for the completely utilitarian attitude of the [373] villagers toward their dogs is the diminution of the number of these animals in the village since the introduction in 1960 of electric lights on the street and paths of Vasilika.

Variations in Wealth

423 This chapter has dealt with the most important methods of providing 511 subsistence and income in Vasilika from the standpoint of the typical small 592 farm owner. However, all the farming households of Vasilika do not have land or other resources of equal value. Among the thirty-five land-owning households of Vasilika there are perhaps eight whose total holdings range from one to [422] fifteen *stremata* and who own only a few sheep and goats. These households usually own donkeys, however, and occasionally, a mule and some chickens. Along with the four farm households in Vasilika who own no land whatever, [464] these eight are the groups who must find wage labor in the village or in the neighboring communities. The level of living of both these groups is close to what is needed for bare subsistence, and a bad agricultural season leaves them close to destitution.

Another eight households are those of farmers whose land-holdings range from about fifteen to thirty *stremata* and who maintain themselves at what is considered an acceptable standard in the village, but who do so by a narrow margin. In several instances, these are households with children too young either to help in the farm work or to supplement income by wage labor.

Slightly more than half of the total number of farm-owning families—some nineteen—might be considered substantial farmers who may have better or worse years but whose present situation is reasonably secure. The largest land owner in the village has about 150 *stremata,* several men have something like 100, and the rest have holdings of 40 or 50 *stremata.* Forty *stremata* are regarded by common consent as a minimum for a decent standard of living for [422] a farm household of four. Among these farmers, some own enough sheep to get additional income from selling surplus animals, but most have just enough sheep to supply milk, cheese, and meat for household needs. These farmers also have one or two horses.

434 A gross difference in the quantity of property owned is not the only fac- 511 tor effecting the income variation among the households of Vasilika. Soil fertility and drainage conditions are not the same on all the village lands, so some farmers get greater yields from smaller plots of well-situated fields. In addition,